

Murphy-Lashbrooke House  
(Moose House)  
Main Street  
Washington  
Mason County  
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-129

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KY  
81-WASH.  
8-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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KY  
81-WASH,  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MURPHY-LASHBROOKE HOUSE (Moose House)

HABS No. KY-129

Location: Main Street at Berry Alley, Washington, Mason County, Kentucky.

Latitude: 38°37'04" Longitude: 83°48'30"

Present Owner: J. S. Moose.

Present Occupant: J. S. Moose.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: This two-story brick structure, erected circa 1820, is an example of early 19th century regional Kentucky architecture. Distinguished by a finely executed Federal style front doorway, with sidelights and an elliptical fanlight, the house illustrates the transition between 18th and 19th century forms and styles. A delicately detailed mantel flanked by arched recesses highlights the parlor.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Family tradition states that this house was built under two subsequent owners, and physical evidence bears out this theory. The owner credited with beginning construction bought the property in 1810 and sold it in 1827 to the man who finished the building. No documented evidence of construction date has been located as yet, but it seems reasonable to date this building circa 1820. Stylistically the house represents a transitional period of Kentucky architecture when medieval and Georgian forms were being blended with Federal elements. Brick was the most popular and widely used building material at the time. In addition, the property sold in 1810 for \$600.00 and in 1827 for \$2,000.00, indicating a degree of building activity in the interim. Family and local traditions also state that the rear wing of the house dates to 1790 and was used as a printing shop. From 1798 to 1810, the property was owned by the printers of the first newspaper in Washington, The Mirror. The rear portion of this wing shows evidence of construction probably pre-dating 1810, although this section has been extensively remodeled in recent years. This evidence, therefore, bears out the traditions.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a complete chain of title to the property on which the structure is located.

Murphy - Lashbrooke House  
(south half, in-lot 13)  
Reference: Mason County Atlas, 1876.

- Deed Book A, P. 214 --- August 26, 1790 --- William Wood and Arthur Fox to John Wilson --- in-lots 13, 14, 15, and 38. (33 pounds currency)
- Deed Book B, P. 41 --- March 20, 1798 --- John Wilson to William Hunter and W. H. Beaumont. (450 pounds Kentucky currency)
- Deed Book C-1, P. 89 --- June 30, 1800 --- W. H. Beaumont to William Hunter.
- Deed Book L, P. 283 --- February 14, 1810 --- William Hunter to William Murphy --- in-lot 13, except Post Office, and all of in-lot 14 (\$600.00).
- Deed Book 31, P. 102 --- June 14, 1827 --- William Murphy to William Lashbrooke (\$2,000.00).
- Deed Book 144, P. 408 --- April 5, 1947 --- W. D. and Frances Wood to J. S. and Eleanor W. Moose --- "this being the same property devised to John Lashbrooke (son) by William Lashbrooke by will (1859) of record in Will Book T, P. 31."
- Will Book Y, P. 63 (1887) - John Lashbrooke to Hannah Jane Wood (Sister).
- Will Book Y, P. 368 - Hannah Wood to Jane L. Wood
- Will Book 2, P. 293 - Jane L. Wood to Ellen D. Boggs
- Will Book 3, P. 1 - Ellen D. Boggs to W. D. Wood, grantor (1939).

4. Alterations and additions: Major alterations have been concentrated on the main (west) facade of the house. Structurally, the house has not been altered, but the addition, since 1948, of a bathroom and storage core has changed the rear and side elevations. The present Greek Revival front porch replaced an earlier 19th century porch, of which there are existing old photos. As originally built, the house probably did not have a covered entrance. The handsome Federal doorway was most likely fully exposed on the facade, as in such contemporary examples as the Benjamin Gratz house in Lexington and "Wickland" in Bardstown. Early photos of the house show a 19th century front porch with chamfered columns, balustrade, and a parapet roof.

Opening onto this roof was a single door with sidelights. Above this door is the brick work with signs of patching and repointing, indicating that the door was a remodeling, probably of an original Palladian window, which was a design motif often found above such expansive Kentucky Federal doorways. Above the present gabled porch is a triple window with a straight lintel course of brick and a keystone. The main gable roof's present cornice treatment probably dates from the period of the earlier porch. It is evidently an addition, as its lines do not integrate into the rake of the gable, and adjoining brickwork shows signs of patching and repointing, as if an original corbeled cornice, like the one at the rear of the house, had been flattened to accommodate the present modillioned cornice line. There is also evidence that original parapet gables at the front of the house were lowered to conform to the roofline. Unique features of the west facade include two circular designs in the brickwork near the cornice. These have been bricked-up for many years, and it is not known whether they were at one time functional wall openings or merely decorative details. No regional prototypes have been located.

5. Historical Context: William Murphy, the owner credited with initiating construction, was the third postmaster of the town of Washington. William Lashbrooke is said to have finished construction of the house. The property was in possession of the Lashbrookes, a prosperous mercantile family, for sixty years, 1827-1887, after which time it descended to the Wood family, one of the oldest in Washington. The present owners are J. S. Moose and his wife, Eleanor Duncan Wood Moose. Mr. Moose is a former ambassador to several Mideast nations.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a unique residential dwelling with notable features such as a modillioned cornice, a Federal frontispiece under a Greek Revival porch, and a long roofed porch on the north elevation.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The L-shaped house measures 56'-6" (five-bay front) x 79'-6". The main part of the house is two stories high with a small basement and attic. The wing along Berry Alley is one story high.

2. Foundations: Local undressed limestone, quite rough with fossils, supports the entire house.
3. Walls: Most exterior walls in the house are of natural red brick. Some of the bricks have been repointed and patched. A small wood frame wall with windows supports the north end of the rear porch roof. A pair of brick oculus appear on the front wall between the second floor windows and the cornice. They are now bricked-up.
4. Structural system: Generally, all supporting walls are of brick, while the interior wood joists support the flooring. Tension rods are visible in the west (front) facade.
5. Porches: The main Federal frontispiece is sheltered by a pedimented Greek Revival porch. Two pilasters and four columns of Doric order support the porch roof. A small triangle decorates the tympanum of the pediment. The entablature is ornamented with a dentil-like cornice and small rectangles. The floor is of brick, laid in a herringbone pattern.

There is a long roofed porch sheltering three-fourths of the north elevation, single-story in height. The roof is supported by ten Doric columns which are identical in design to the columns of the front porch. Most of the floor is brick, also laid in a herringbone pattern, and a small portion of this floor at the extreme end is stone.

6. Chimneys: There are four brick chimneys. One is on either end wall of the main part of the house. The third one rises above the roof in the center of the rear addition and the fourth is at the east end wall of the addition, an outside end chimney.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance doorway has typical Federal elements: a semi-circular fanlight and sidelights. A pair of paneled French doors is flanked by Doric pilasters.  
  
Other entrances have simple paneled doors.
  - b. Windows and shutters: First and second floor nine-over-nine wooden double-hung sash windows appear in the west and east walls of the main part of the house. In the center of the second floor facing west, there is a three-part window: the center one is nine-over-nine double-hung sash and the two

very narrow windows on either side are three-over-three sash. Two twelve-over-eight, one nine-over-six, and one nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows appear in the north wall of the rear wing. The wood frame wall at the north end of the porch contains three nine-over-six sash windows. The second floor north elevation has two six-over-six double-hung sash windows. The south facade contains two nine-over-nine and two twelve-over-eight sash windows.

Hinged shutters are all of wood with two sections of louvres and are painted green. Two four-pane casement windows appear on either side of the chimneys in each gable at the north and south ends of the main part of the house.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: There are three gable roofs. The roof over the main part of the house is covered with mineral surface asphalt shingles. The two lower roofs are standing rib joint tin roofs, painted green.
- b. Cornice: The cornice on the west (front) elevation is a box cornice supported by dentil-like brackets.
- c. Dormers: There are three dormers with shed roofs on the south facade and one on the north facade of the wing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: There is a cellar underneath the dining room, and is accessible by a stair on the southeast corner of the stair hall.
- b. First floor: The main entrance opens into the grand stair hall, which lies symmetrically between the parlor (to the left) and the dining room (to the right). To the rear is the "wing" which houses (from front to rear) the sitting room and kitchen. Behind the kitchen is the original study room which is accessible only by a door from the porch. A bathroom, a hall, and closets occupy the addition in the inside corner of the long north side porch.

- c. Second Floor: The second floor is laid out similarly to the first floor with the master bedroom over the parlor, a bedroom over the dining room, and a bedroom over the sitting room. Bathrooms are located as they are on the first floor and there is a maid's room accessible only by a stair from and above the kitchen. The grand stair continues up to the attic.
  - d. Attic: The attic is entered through a stairway on the east wall of the second floor stairhall. It runs the full length of the main part of the house.
2. Stairways: The main stair is an open well, open string, which runs two full stories from the main floor into the attic. There is a straight-run stair connecting the kitchen with the maid's room. There is another small stair, a quarter turn with winders, linking the sitting room with the second floor above. A straight-run stair running perpendicular to and underneath a main stair connects the entry foyer with the basement.
  3. Flooring: There are hardwood floors throughout, with the exception of linoleum floor in the kitchen and a concrete floor in the basement.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most walls are covered with decorator wallpaper. Kitchen walls are painted. The attic walls are unfinished.
  5. Doorways and doors: All doors are mortise and tenon with panels. A simple molded trim accentuates the panels.
  6. Trim: The north wall of the parlor contains two large arched wood niches, almost floor to ceiling, and an elaborate mantelpiece with four small columns which meet at their midpoints. Floral scroll detailing enhances the open string of the main staircase.
  7. Hardware: Some original hardware exists on doors.
  8. Mechanical equipment: A new gas heating unit is in the basement.
- D. Site:
1. General setting and orientation: The front facade on Main Street faces approximately 5° north of due west (275°). A cistern appears north of the main part of the house. An orchard appears at the east end of the site. Washington's limestone sidewalk is well maintained and is in front of the house.

2. Outbuildings:

- a. House-Garage: A small two-room house, 34'2" x 22'0", with a connecting garage, is situated behind the main house.
- b. Privy: A privy (6'10"x 4'2") sits just north of the small garage.

Prepared by: Ronald J. Burch, Project Historian  
and  
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Historic American Buildings Survey  
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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: Photos in the possession of the Mason County Museum and Mrs. Frank Wise, Mason County, show the house in its early 20th century form. A rear view shows that elevation prior to the addition of the present bath and storage core. Other photos show the 19th century front porch and overhead door configuration. These photos also show the relationship of the house to the early 19th century post office, which stood adjacent to the property. One of these early views shows a portion of a brick outbuilding with a pyramidal roof, which stood in the rear yard of the house. The old photos also show clearly the patching and repointing in the second story above the central triple opening and in the circular designs in the brickwork.
- B. Interviews: Mrs. Frank Wise, descendant of the Wood family, confirmed in a June 1975 interview the story that the house was built for two consecutive owners, Murphy and Lashbrooke. She is in possession of a number of old photos of the house, as well as some original furnishings.

A telephone conversation in June 1975, from Mrs. Donald Wood to Miss Hattie Taylor of Washington confirmed the local tradition that the rear portion of the building (part of the service wing) had been called an old print shop.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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2. Secondary and published sources:

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Coleman, J. Winston. Historic Kentucky. Lexington, Kentucky: Henry Clay Press, 1968.

Lee, Lucy C. A Historical Sketch of Mason County, Kentucky. Louisville, Kentucky: Masonic Home Journal Press, 1925.

Mastin, Bettye Lee. "Federal Houses in Kentucky," Antiques, Volume CV, No. 4 (April, 1974) pp. 906-913.

Newcomb, Rexford. Architecture in Old Kentucky. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953. (Photo, Plate 2a)

Newcomb, Rexford. Old Kentucky Architecture. New York: Bonanza Books, 1940.

PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in co-operation with Old Washington, Inc. in the summer of 1975. Under the supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, a documentation of nine structures and one site was produced by Perry Benson (University of Pennsylvania), the project supervisor; Ronald Burch (Cornell University), the project historian; Mark Hall (Pennsylvania State University), Kenneth Payson (Cornell University), William F. Petell (Syracuse University) and Steven Shapiro (University of Maryland), student assistant architects. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress.

ADDENDUM TO  
MURPHY-LASHBROOKE HOUSE  
(MOOSE HOUSE)  
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